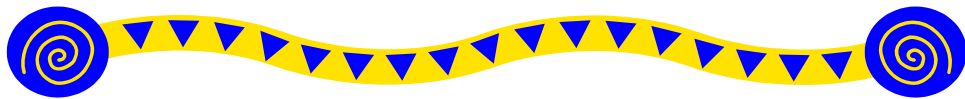


How to fulfil your intentions



Foreword

Welcome to how to fulfil your intentions

This e-book focuses a direct approach to fulfilling your intentions. Whether it is a personal or professional one, the process is pretty much the same

We'll talk about dealing with the emotions, pushing yourself, motivation, time management, setting targets that motivate you to reach them and much more.

Enjoy the content and best of luck fulfilling your intentions

Yours in lifelong development

Rich Lucas

Introduction

Jon was a man who set goals constantly. Usually at defined points in the year, for example, new year (Most have some sort of attempt at resolutions) his birthdays, start of a new month. He really believed in setting these goals which ranged from getting on in his career as an accountant, one of his more larger ambitions was to make partner in the small practice he worked at, to cutting down on fatty foods and getting more exercise. He thought about his goals a lot. Unfortunately for Jon, he didn't get exactly what he wanted from his goals, even though he planned them perfectly to the letter. Jon was close friends with a man called Steve. Steve was the type of guy that Jon would say "made him sick!" He never seemed to really set goals as such, at least not to the extent that Jon did, who religiously went through the process of SMART goal-setting, re- evaluation of his life's goals. However, unlike Jon, Steve achieved everything he went after and then some. He was Operations Director at the IT firm he worked for, was in good physical condition, married with two children and enjoyed an active social life, Steve never spoke of his goals, but everything seemed to fall in his lap. Steve did do a little preparation, but Steve's focus was different from Jon's...

Goals...We are told that it's really important that we set them and set them in a certain way. They must be specific, measurable, agreed, realistic and time-tabled. They must be contextual and we must be committed to them to work.

Quite frankly, there are millions of pages on the internet that tell you how to set goals so I don't particularly want to waste too much of our time with them here. The opening story illustrates what goes on over the world with people setting goals constantly, pick up a copy of any lifestyle magazine and you'll find something on defining your future goals through this brand new process that looks suspiciously like last months...

In the story, Jon's focus was on Goal-setting. Steve's focus was on goal achievement. This is what separates them. Steve followed the same process as Jon but while Jon asked himself "What do I want?" Steve asked himself "What do I have to do to get what I want?" Hence Steve, rather than reflecting and going introverted has turned activist and is more focused of actually getting the goals rather than spending time perfecting the plan. So many people fail to meet their goals not because they wrongly planned or set goals to high, its' because they never get around to putting their goal into action.

This book will take you through a simple, no-nonsense guide to setting and planning your goals. Rather than blind you with complex issues, I'll give you a list of questions to answer on your goal.

After this we'll get straight into the achievement of your goals and how it's done, remarkably simple once you have the right mindset. We'll discuss the character traits you NEED to achieve your goal, why you NEED to be scared sometimes and why you NEED to have urgency. A word of warning before we begin, I adopt a straight line approach to pretty much everything! I won't fill these pages with irrelevancies or theories that I haven't, myself tested. Everything in this book is written from experience so therefore I may come across as a little direct at times. Enjoy the read and I sincerely hope you draw a lot of benefit from this book.

Easier done than said.

Many of you would have heard the above saying said in reverse, and in most cases it's true. But when it comes to fulfilling your intentions, talking about it too much can have an adverse effect.

Take the legendary Derek "Del-boy" Trotter from the show "Only fools and horses". He would talk up his intentions often "This time next year, we'll be millionaires". Granted, he is a fictional character, but most of us can relate someone in our own life who talks a good game but does little else with it. The classic is the guy down the pub who's always talking about this big scheme he got "in the pipeline" or this great new business that they are setting up. Have you ever noticed that they never get specific when explaining these ideas? I have no doubt that their heart is in the right place, but all this talking will get them nowhere, they shouldn't be sat next to me talking about how they are going to fulfil intentions. They should be out there making it happen. Most of the time it's easier to just get out and do it rather than sit and talk about it.

One great guy I worked with a number of years, I'll call him Phillip to protect his modesty! He's always been great at voicing his intentions. I've heard that he is going to:

Write a sketch show based on the place where we worked at the time (this was before Ricky Gervais' "the office")

Start a business selling used cars

Get a coveted promotion

Become a millionaire (Common one that!)

I don't think any of the above was beyond him quite honestly, but they were just that, intentions that he talked up rather than fulfilled. He just stayed in his comfort zone and is still working in the same job.

It's worryingly common for people not to fulfil intentions because it's easier to talk about doing the things you really want to rather than getting on and beginning work on creating the future that you want.

When you begin your own work on your own goals, involve people, talk of your intentions and update regularly but be mindful of talking too much. The iron clad rule is that goal setting is for the talkers and intention fulfilment is for the doer's and the people who want to make the real differences.

From here on in...

There are a few things you need to assume from here on in

From here on in everything is your fault!

Yes! Everything! Firstly though, just because it's your fault, this doesn't mean that you're to blame. From here on in also, no one is to blame. If you have a problem, you search for solutions rather than blaming anyone or anything. Taking responsibility is so difficult to start with because so many of us are mentally conditioned to deflect the blame should something go wrong. For example a classic goal I hear a lot is that the goal setter sets a goal to get to the gym 3 days a week for the next 3 months. They have already decided that the goal is SMART and definitely something they can do. When I meet them 3 months later however, they have only kept it up for the first couple of weeks or so. When I ask "What happened?" I get all kind of excuses. For example

- ✚ Work Commitments
- ✚ Too tired
- ✚ Family commitments
- ✚ No time
- ✚ Lack of support

Work didn't get in the way and they were not too busy. Quite simply, they made the decision to do something else rather than their goal. Now some get defensive when I adopt this stance, but really, be honest. When you strip down the defences and the justifications, that's what really happened. I know because I've done it (and still do it) myself! I not suggesting that other factors will not get in the way of you fulfilling your intention, what I'm suggesting is that you need to be 100% honest with yourself with the reasons why you are not making progress towards your intention...its not work, family, friends or lack of support...it's you. The people who get their goals/intentions do so usually in spite of adversity and some of them because of it. Think of the great footballer Pele, who had to learn football by playing with a coconut instead of a ball, Sir Alan Sugar, who, from humble beginnings in Hackney east London went on to build an empire worth £800 million. Look around in your own life and you'll see people who have done it regardless of circumstance.

So, from here on in the buck stops with you.

From here on in concentrate on intentions rather than goals

The word "goal" is over used in my opinion. Especially if you work in a white collar job, you'll have so many "goals" that it's laughable. I only mentioned the word "goal" in this book so that people wouldn't get confused. To have a goal that you will really meet and beat you have got to have a burning intention to acquire your target no matter what.

Burning intentions

Your burning intention will be your solid foundation you can build your goal upon. Another reason why people fail to meet their goals is because of lack of intention. I liken intentions to our primal urges and instinct. Our cave dwelling ancestors didn't set goals about how much food they planned to get or sabre toothed tigers they planned to kill nor did they arrange marketing plans and stress over third quarter projections. Their intentions were to feed and protect themselves and their families. With this burning intention, the process of feeding and protecting took care of itself. Of course we've evolved now (at least some of us have!) but this just illustrates how powerful having a burning intention is.

More on this later

Solid goals

Once you have your burning intention, you can start to think about building your solid goals. You may well find that if your intentions are strong enough, goal setting comes easy and it appears as it should. A means to an end and not the end itself. A goal's purpose is the refined, evolved yin to the primal, instinctive yang. Bring them together to make a whole and make your best chance of achieving.

More on this later

Goals vs. Intentions

A goal is something you have to think about and set for yourself. Then, having set it for yourself, you then dedicate an appropriate amount of energy to achieve it. You'll never know if it is enough until it's too late. An intention, on the other hand is something that you'd move Heaven and earth to get. Only when you have an intention, I mean a real burning intention to do something, can you set a goal.

From here on in focus on the result rather than the process

From here on in...get hungry

If you're not hungry to fulfil your burning intention, it probably wasn't even lukewarm in the first place. Save yourself the heartache and go after something else

From here on in be aware of how you're thinking and feeling

Big indicator. Let's firstly talk about discomfort. Generally speaking, if you have a so called intention (Because that's where it starts remember!) but you don't feel too bad about it. Quite frankly

IT WON'T CHANGE YOU MUCH!

You'll probably achieve it, but it won't have challenged you, pushed you or formed your character at all, lets take the example of someone of a weight loss plan. Let's say they plan to lose 1 lb in three months, and that is their intention. They'll achieve it but I doubt they'd look or feel any the better for it. Therefore their goal would have counted for nothing. Now up that 1 lb to 1 stone. Now it's a little tougher. How do you think achieving this would make the setter feel? Maybe 2 stone, what then? The acid test of whether or not your goal will test you is how you feel when you think about it. If you're not too worried about it then its either not challenging enough or it's not important enough for you to worry about (Many of us "intend" to learn Spanish one of these days...) don't waste your time with non specific, half baked intentions like this. Be scared of it and face it down anyway. It's only when we are in discomfort that we can truly grow. Liken it to body building, where the muscle must be worked to exhaustion before it grows or to entrepreneurialism where the individual's nerve and stress levels learn to grow as they are exercised. Only, by purposefully exposing yourself to things which test you and push the boundaries of your own comfort zone, can you find the strength to fulfil your intention.

From here on in be aware of how you will think and feel when you achieve your goal

You need to know what it's going to feel like when you achieve your goal and to illustrate this, I'll share part of my sensory attachment with you.

"It's early morning, about 7:00am. I've driven to the Downs near where I live in Bristol in my Silver Mercedes. I start off right at the cliff edge point of the downs that looks out over Bristol gorge and the suspension bridge and breathe the cool morning air, whilst performing breathing and flexibility exercises. I'm wearing my blitz hooded top, my tracksuit trousers and my beanie hat. Once I've finished this I start to run, taking in the atmosphere and peace of the green surroundings"

Notice I haven't actually mentioned what my goal is?! Nor does it matter because by achieving my goal, I'll be able to do that every morning. The point is that this is just a part of it; I have whole sensory attachments to my goal. I know what everything looks like, feels like and sounds like. This has made my intention stronger and real, even writing about it has made me burn inside to achieve it. So I'd urge you to do same. If your goal is to buy a house, what does the house look like, how many bedrooms are there, what do you do in the house? Or if your goal is to lose weight, when you reach your intended weight, what are you doing? What are you wearing? Who are you with? I believe this is deeply personal so work on it yourself and keep it to yourself, one thing you can never do is to have a goal that other people expect of you. It has to be yours

From here on in, you always have time

Please, please, please erase the words "I don't have time" or "I'm too busy" or any other non specific, dismissive, self important crap out of your vocabulary. This is a crusade! Ever noticed that the people who go on about how busy they are are usually the least busy? Funny that! Those who have to talk about it, usually have something to prove or hide. Now I am not for one minute suggesting that you are not busy people, what I am suggesting is that by hiding behind the aforementioned statements (don't make me repeat them!) it becomes a self fulfilling prophecy and you will believe you are busy even when you are not. All this serves to do is whenever you are not fulfilling your intention is gives you a mental "get out" clause "Oh can't go to the gym tonight, far too busy" Not only are you not being honest with yourself, you can really damage your progress this way. If you need time, make time and if your intention is strong enough, you will find time.

A writer I admire, a man named Geoff Thompson wrote his first book sat on the toilet of the factory that paid him to sweep the floor! His wife at that time was not supportive so he could not write it at home. His intention was strong enough that he found time in the most unlikely place! If Geoff had played the "I don't have time" card. He'd probably still be in the factory, as fate would have it, he's a BAFTA winning writer with hundreds of projects, books and films under his belt.

So next time you feel like you want to play the "too busy" or "don't have time" card ask yourself "What am I actually doing?" and "Is my intention this weak?" If I know I will be busy in the day and evening, I go to the gym in the morning. I've been known to get up at 5am to ensure the daily renewal of my goal is taken care of. If a surprise is sprung on me, I will inform the surprier that it's important I get to the gym and I will tell them exactly what I am doing it for. If it is an emergency, I will go afterwards. Most of the time, lack of time is a state of mind. If you

believe you have time, then you do. Your intention must take a high priority in your life if you are going to have any chance of meeting it.

How to set your goal

Following on from the "here on ins" if you are going to succeed in achieving what ever you are setting out to achieve, we need to establish your intentions.

I think this is why traditional future father-in- laws ask their daughters would be suitor "What are your intentions young man!?" It scares the hell out of them and the future father-in-law will get a from-the-heart answer!

So here is where we will start off. What are our burning intentions? At this point we don't need to concern ourselves with how we are going to achieve them or worry about the whys and the wheres. At this point in time let's work on our basic and primal intentions.

Top ten intentions

- ❑ To become a millionaire
- ❑ To retire early
- ❑ To work for myself
- ❑ To raise my family as best I can
- ❑ To study at university
- ❑ To travel the world
- ❑ To take up some kind of art

So what do you really want? Firstly to say that I will not advocate that you set goals that you are not appropriately committed to. I choose my words very carefully; by saying "appropriately" I mean that you are able and willing to expend the correct amount of energy to see this through to the finish. Save yourself the de-motivated and dejected feeling of heartache when you fail to make it because you have not appropriately committed yourself. Appropriate commitment is something that is personal to you, it's not like saying "Commit 110%" like some other coaches and personal development "experts". It doesn't and can't work like that, what is "100%" anyway? What does it feel like? Only an individual knows if they are trying hard at something.

Different people work in different ways. Take Matt Fiddes, 27 years old and owner of the biggest chain of martial arts schools in the UK. Matt has worked solidly for the past 10 years to build what he has got. Matt travelled to the USA at 16 to learn all he could about the professional martial arts business. He came back and opened a full time martial arts studio in Barnstaple. This became so popular that he opened schools across the UK and put instructors in place to run these schools. Thing got so successful that he is now franchising his schools and his programmes to people across the world.

Now Matt has an interesting theory when it came to his business. While people around him were striking a balance between work and play, Matt was all about the work. I heard him say that while people he knew were out going to pubs and clubs and university and generally having a good time, he was opening schools and running his business. This sacrifice has paid off. Matt's burning intention was to work in martial arts. He set his goals according to this, lots of smaller goals like go to America to learn the business, open schools and build his business. I very much doubt that he done much formal goal setting in the early days, more like he simply asked himself, "What do I have to do to achieve my burning intention?"

Now, Matt's story may seem a little extreme, but he expended an appropriate amount of energy to get what he wanted. Had he only wanted to run a twice a week class he may have expended less energy to get there. By expending the energy he did, he has a professional, multi-million pound business empire doing something he loves.

So we need to ask ourselves how much are we willing to pay. Now by pay, this doesn't necessarily mean money. Cost can be measured in emotional, physical, mental expenditure or time spent.

Before you embark on your goal achievement journey, you really need to know in yourself how much appropriate energy you will need to fulfil your intentions; will you need to work every day on it? Twice a day? What will you sacrifice to work on your goal? Extra hour in bed? Time with your mates? If you find yourself struggling to expend appropriate energy or make sacrifices, then you will probably never fulfil that intention and maybe you'd be better off looking at something else.

When I was training to take one of my Black belt exams, I'd run in the mornings and train in the arts in the evenings. I was working all day plus teaching 12 classes a week, plus trying to spend time with my partner and friends. Things had to give, but my intention was to have the stamina to get through the grading and to be good enough technically to pass. So I sacrificed an hour in bed every morning (particularly horrible!) and an hour every evening. My physical expenditure was tough to begin with, as I lost weight due to training so much, I felt weak and tired to begin with. I was tested emotionally and mentally by turning down nights out with friends and nights in with Natalie. Did I expend appropriate energy? At the time I felt I was doing too much, I soon got used to it and again the sacrifice paid off. On the day, some less prepared people collapsed with exhaustion, got beaten up in the sparring and some merely gave up. Some forgot their movements and failed on the day. I passed with flying colours. I remember thinking on the day that I was so glad I was prepared! Japanese Sumo wrestlers have a saying they live to "Cry in training, laugh in the arena!"

Your intention should make you shudder slightly when you say it. You should be slightly scared and intimidated by it. Anything less, you will not be challenging yourself and won't really gain anything from it.

Think of all the great things in life. Parenting, starting a business, being promoted etc. They all involve a bit of discomfort, I mean real discomfort, not fooling yourself that you're uncomfortable when you actually aren't.

I liken this to the effect when a sculptor creates a piece of art out of a piece of rock. To start with, the rock is shapeless and ugly and it always finishes off beautiful and elegant (well, most of the time!) To change so drastically, the piece of rock has to go through hell. It's battered, chipped, shaped and carved. It goes through a tough process to go from what it is to what it eventually becomes. To fulfil intentions, we have to put ourselves through a similar process when we want to change.

Define your burning intentions. Remember, the acid test is if it makes you react physically in some way. If I am trying to conquer something that really scares me, I get a heavy feeling in my stomach, if it's a business idea, I get a tingling sensation down my arms and legs. Pay close attention to these physiological cues because they will inadvertently let you know how you really feel about your intentions

Once you have a clear knowledge of what your intentions are, say the words to yourself

“My intention is...” take a note of how you feel when you say it. Remember that if you don't experience a noticeable physical feeling, then you aren't challenging yourself enough.

So, you have your burning intention clear in your mind and body. The next step is we need to ask “What do I need to do to get there”. This is about doing, not planning. Make a list of everything you need to do to get there and begin with the things that you really don't want to do.

Now you can set one goal around the list items that you need to do to fulfil your burning intention. Your goals should be specific to one subject, the subject must be something you are REALLY passionate about and the specific must be something you are VERY focused on. Have you ever tried to pierce a cereal box with a spoon? Give it a try, it takes ages and doesn't do the job very well. Why? Because the spoon is blunt. Try and fulfil a burning intention with a blunt focus and the result of you fulfilling your intention will be the same as trying to pierce a cereal box with a spoon. It is very difficult to break through your intention with a blunt focus. On the other hand, have you ever tried to pierce a cereal box with a knife? Easy! It goes straight through. All the energy in the knife is focused on its point. This is how you should approach your burning intention. With a sharp focus and direct intent. Let's say you wanted to qualify as, say a financial adviser. Your burning intention would be say, to have a career as an independent financial adviser and earn £50,000 a year. You'd then ask yourself, “What do I need to do to get there?” This could include

- Re-qualifying in financial services
- Getting a new job
- Reading up on latest developments
- Networking with key individuals

And so on. Once you have a clear idea of what you really need to do to fulfil your burning intention, you need to ask yourself a tougher question “Am I prepared to pay the price?” Remember, when we talk about paying the price, it can be financial, physical, emotional, mental or time cost. Therefore, if we take our above example of the IFA career, the costs could be as follows

The financial cost of purchasing the books and study materials
The Time cost of committing to study or evening class
The mental cost of learning new material
The emotional cost of maybe not seeing your family and friends as much
and the emotional cost of living with the stress of study and qualifying.

There is no such thing as a free lunch. Whatever you want, you can have but you always have to pay in some form or another.

So, you've defined your burning intention and it makes you shudder when you think about it.

You've asked yourself "What do I have to do to get there" and you have come up with a list of all aspects regardless of whether they are positive or negative.

You have then looked at this list and defined the costs (financial, physical, emotional, mental and time) and asked yourself "Am I prepared to "pay" these costs?"

If you can honestly answer "Yes" then you are on to a winner! What this part serves to do is to ensure your goal is specific to you, you know exactly what it entails and that you are prepared to take it forward.

Next, you have to be able to measure your goal, otherwise, how do you know if you are making any progress? Be careful though, because it is all too easy to set a measurement criteria and not to stick to it. Procrastination is your worst enemy at this stage, especially if you don't see results straight away. People can somehow convince themselves that it doesn't matter any more. Don't let this be you.

I like to split measurement criteria into two groups. One is the Extrinsic or "hard" aspects and the other is the intrinsic or "soft aspects.

Firstly, let's look at the extrinsic measurement criteria. The best way to think of this is having something tangible as a result of progress or fulfilling your intention. For example

- A new house or car
- A promotion or a new business
- A six pack stomach
- A new personal best in a marathon

An extrinsic change is a change others can see in you. I know that we don't do things for other people, we do them for ourselves but in order to keep our motivation up, it really helps to have something to show for it. Some of us are extrinsically motivated people, which means that we are motivated when a change is noticed. I suspect that more people are extrinsically motivated than they let on and I think everyone gains something from getting noticed, but I digress!

Being aware of this, I keep two web logs (blogs) documenting two lines of work that I pursue. Now, when it comes to entry time, there is no way I really fancy putting in "Nothing to report!" or "It rained today." Know what I mean? I want to be able to add value and report how great everything has been going. And entering into these blogs for all to see motivates me to go forward. I also tell family and friends what I'm doing, this means that they will probably ask me how it's going and continually remind me of it! Another good strategy!

Next, let's look at intrinsic measurement criteria. These are aspects that you can't see, smell, taste, spend or drive, you can only feel it. For example

- Increased self confidence
- Higher self esteem
- Positive Outlook or a different perspective
- Increased knowledge

So, an intrinsic change is just for you and it usually comes as a by product of achieving an extrinsic aspect. If you got a promotion you badly wanted, it necessarily follows that your self esteem would increase.

To reap the full benefits from fulfilling your intentions, you need to be aware of and enjoy both criteria, but when it comes to cold, hard measurement, concentrate on the extrinsic aspects and the intrinsic ones will take care of themselves.

When you have defined your burning intentions, you then need to concentrate on solid goals. Now, the most common and used method of goal setting is the SMART method. Smart is an acronym for:

Specific

The goal must be specific to a point and not ambiguous

Measurable

There must be a clear way to measure the achievement of the goal

Achievable

It must be achievable and realistic to the individual. This is a deeply personal thing as if the target is way beyond the individual's capabilities, it will be difficult to put together the motivation to keep pushing towards it

wRitten down

(Silent "W") When you write the target on paper, you bring it to life. I remember reading a study where a proportion of Harvard graduates wrote out their goals upon graduating, they were tracked down many years after graduating and it was worked out that they were 97% more likely to have achieved their goals as opposed to the graduates who had not written them down

Timed

As mentioned several times in this book, without time limits, without pressure, the sense of urgency becomes diminished and the focus gets lost. Have a time limit draws your energies to the forefront and makes your intention a top priority.

Multiple goal setting

It's simply not good enough to set one goal. I would recommend that you set more than one.

Let's look at a simple weight loss target

"By the end of March, I would have lost 6lbs in weight"

This is fine, but what if you don't lose 6lbs in weight? You'll feel pretty dejected about it, but then what if you lose 8lbs? Or 10lbs? We need a measurement that recognises above and beyond performance.

So I would recommend that you set three measurements.

Measurement 1: By the end of March, I would have lost 6lbs in weight

Measurement 2: By the end of March, I would have lost 8lbs in weight

Measurement 3: By the end of March, I would have lost 10lbs in weight

The way this works is the following

Measurement 1 (If I get this, I'll be happy)

Ultimately, this is what you are looking to get this one. If you hit it, you've got to your target

Measurement 2 (If I get this, I'll be really happy!)

This recognises going above and beyond. Having this sort of goal motivates you to study a little bit more, stay on the diet more stringently, make that couple extra sales calls etc.

Measurement 3 (If I get this, I'll be ecstatic)

Exactly what it says on the tin. This goal represents the best realistic outcome of you working towards your goal. You can push the boundaries of what you think you can achieve. It's a well established fact that we use only a small fraction of our potential. Setting "Measurement 3s" can make you challenge your own perception of yourself.

OK, just so we don't lose our way, let's look at an example.

My burning intention is...to be a millionaire! This is good! It makes me shudder, I know what it will feel and look like. Excellent, it passes that test.

What do I need to do to achieve it?

Rob a bank

What are the costs involved?

I'd probably end up in prison, so the financial costs would be that I'd lose my house and job, the emotional costs would be that I would be separated from my wife, family and friends. The time costs would be what I'd lose in prison and the mental costs would be living in fear of getting caught.

Am I prepared to pay these costs?

No!!!!

So I would not make a very good bank robber, and no, before any of you asks, I haven't thought about it! Let's look at it again with a more sensible outlook

My burning intention is...to be a millionaire! Once again it makes me shudder, so no change there

What do I need to do to achieve it?

Work hard at writing, consulting and investing

What are the costs involved?

Financial costs of the initial investment to get the projects off the ground.
Sunken funds if it doesn't go my way.

Time costs of the time it takes to write, consult and invest, looking at the markets, networking, doing research etc.

Emotional costs of writing will leave me with little energy, possibly not spending enough time with friends and family

Mental costs of worrying about the investments

Am I prepared to pay these costs?

Yes, to fulfil my intention

This is just an example of how it may play out. You have to look into the deepest, darkest recesses of your fears and get them out in the open. Of course, if I looked at these costs and was unsure if I commit to them, I simply wouldn't. I'd save myself the heartache and think of another way to fulfil my intentions. You see, it's less to do with planning and more to do with finding ways to get what you want.

Can you do this? Well only you know that. You may have support from people around you; you may have expectations placed upon you. But in your own private place, you are the only one who knows if you can do this or not. There is a difference between setting a challenge and setting an impossibility.

This is not something that I or anyone else can help you with. It's very individual. But be aware, that it is down to you whether you fulfil your intention. If you fail, it's not your circumstance, your lack of support or your people watching to see you fail...Its you.

The more personal responsibility you take for the things that go in your life, the more control you will have of them.

An acquaintance of mine, Alison, had a burning intention. She wanted to go to Africa on a safari holiday. No mean feat as she had a family (A husband and 2 young girls). Now this wasn't a passing fancy, she had wanted to go since she was young. She had subconsciously and loosely defined what she had to do to fulfil it, and this was to save money for the trip for them all to go. To cut a long story short, she still hasn't been. Last time I saw her, I asked her what the progress was, and I got "Well, there was John's birthday in March, and then Shelly's hen weekend in June Then the girl's school trip and before I knew it, it was Christmas again"

Basically, I got a load of excuses, I thought maybe the burning had gone out of it but she was still insistent that she still really wanted to go but was finding it difficult with these other commitments. I was thinking that she could have spent less on birthdays and social event or put a little bit away, she could have got a second job or worked overtime, she could have...

But it's got nothing to do with me whether or not she fulfils her intention. What price is Alison willing to pay to fulfil her intention? See how personal it is? The reason that I'm sharing this story is that Alison comes out excuses why she hasn't saved the money. I would have said "I, and nothing else am responsible for not saving the money" OK I probably wouldn't have said it like that! But I certainly wouldn't blame anyone, or anything else.

This is a really strange thing! Because as we have previously alluded to, our first instinct when things go wrong is to blame someone or something else. So what you'll find to begin with (even further along the line) is that you take responsibility, not blame, responsibility for something, that little voice inside you will be screaming out for you to pass the buck! Ignore it and keep the power for yourself!

So the next questions we will ask yourself is

Can I really do this? What's going to try and stop me?

If we follow on from our example earlier

Can I really do this? What's going to try and stop me?

Yes I can do this, others have done it before me and people are doing it now. I will study best practice and just get on and do it and learn continually

What will try and stop my Hmmm, My wife, very risk adverse! Some so-called "friends" that whenever I make an effort to break away, try to keep me down, my mum, again very risk adverse, my bank balance! My lack of concentration and attention to detail, my own fears and lack of confidence, what if it doesn't work out, what will I do?

Now we have got down external factors and our own demons to deal with. But that's OK, we've all got them, fear and self doubt are as natural as hunger and thirst, happiness and sadness, so let's not try to quash them, let's work with them and they will work with us.

Now I know what will try and stop me, how will I deal with it?

My wife and my mum, there is going to be no consoling them so I'll need to keep them informed and emphasise why I am doing this and demonstrate the security of it all. So called "friends" leave them where they are, if they want to come along, they can, my bank balance, start off with small investments and build up. My lack of concentration and attention to detail, do what I'm doing know! Locked in my home office listening to music having spent the last 4 hours writing! My own fears and lack of confidence...Look, If it all screws up tomorrow, I'll deal with it, I can work anywhere, I can temp, If I fail, I'll learn and I'll try again and again.

It's a good way of doing it because it exercises your demons on paper and you can be as honest with yourself as you want to be, they are your intentions after all.

Finally, you need to set yourself a time limit; otherwise you never know when your target should be met. This is as simple as saying...

"I will have fulfilled this by..."

When you give yourself a time limit to do something, you can create a sense of urgency to fulfil that something. More on having a sense of urgency, this is something that people don't have enough of these days, after all, there is always tomorrow...isn't there?

I am personally with the Tibetan philosophy that we are dying from the day that we are born. Why? Because we are! You're dying, I'm dying, I personally realised this when I had a random dream, when I was about 20. In my dream, I was "celebrating" my 53rd birthday and the one overriding emotion I felt in this dream was depression, depression because I'd wondered where my life had gone and what I had done with it. Now, I'm not a big believer in visions or premonitions, I've pretty much got both feet on the ground so I think this was just a random, run of the mill rapid eye movement dream possibly coming off what I saw on TV or read earlier that day. What I think does differentiate me is that I have chosen to see the significance in it. Can you see yourself in 20 or 30 years time? How will you look back on your life? In order for you to fulfil your intentions to the best of your ability, you need to understand that there is only a limited amount of time whichever way you look at it. There are only so many hours in a day, only so many days in a month and only so many years in a lifetime.

This should create a strong enough sense of urgency to get you on to fulfilling your intentions straight away!

Motivation

Motivation, as you should be aware is simply something you must have to fulfil intentions. Without it, you won't get very far. It's difficult to define motivation in a practical sense that we can all use, so let's look at it this way

There is no such thing as inaction. You are always performing an action whether you like it or not. Therefore, if you are working night and day to fulfil your intention, then you are performing the action of working night and day to fulfil your intention. If you sit there and do nothing then you are performing an action of sitting there and doing nothing.

So if we are always performing an action no matter what we do, we need to divide our actions into two categories.

Category one are actions that take you closer to fulfilling your burning intention. These are actions you can clearly define as beneficial to your efforts; this is centred around investing (time, money, energy etc.) on whatever you are in the process of achieving. The tangle that many get caught up with is that they kid themselves that they are performing actions that take them closer to fulfilling their intention when they are actually not. You can define what does and doesn't move you closer to your intentions by, very honestly answering the following question "How can I quantify that what I am doing is moving me closer to my intention?" Asking this question forces you to look at results, the bottom line and how does what you're doing add value to your efforts of fulfilling your intention. If you can't answer this question, then maybe you could be using your time and actions a little better

Category two actions are the opposite from category one, in that they take you further away from achieving what you have set out to achieve. This includes procrastination, distraction, laziness etc. The key learning points is that you need to be aware of which category two actions that you personally are most likely to be affected by. Take myself, I'm awful for getting distracted and sidetracked into something else. However, if I am aware of it, I can prepare for it and make sure it doesn't happen.

So there are two types of action, one takes you closer to fulfilling your intentions and the other takes you further away. This ties in directly to motivation, because fundamentally, we are both moved and motivated to gain good things or feelings or to avoid bad things or bad feelings. And this can apply to anything we do. If we take some of the more generic things that we, as human beings could be motivated to do

- ✚ Be good parents
- ✚ Climb the corporate ladder
- ✚ Work out at the gym
- ✚ Start and new routine

All of these have one, or more uncomfortable elements in them, but it's the good things we can get from them that we move towards. By being good parents, we get the sense of wellbeing that we've done well by our kids, by climbing the corporate ladder, we feel the sense of security and maybe social acceptance.

We are very rarely motivated by external factors. To gain motivation, we should concentrate on the internal feelings that we are working towards. So, think about how fulfilling your intention will feel like and direct all your energies to move towards that feeling.

Now we are more aware of the power of our actions, we can now look at putting the right things in to the vehicle that will take us to fulfilling our intentions i.e. our bodies and minds. Ever get those days where you just can't gee yourself up to do anything? You can't actually put your finger on what it is that makes you feel so uninspired, but this is how you're feeling. We tend to attribute this to our crazy-busy life as we are all soooo busy! But seriously, you should take a look at what you're putting in to reflect what you're putting out.

Let's look at the physiological side to begin with. What would happen if you put diesel in to a petrol powered car? It wouldn't perform like you would expect it to would it? Everyone knows that they should "eat right". The media is so full of articles, TV programs and public awareness ads that the excuse of not knowing "how" to eat right is getting less and less plausible. Choosing the wrong food and drink can have a drastic effect on our inspiration and drive levels. For example, having a large mixed grill and a couple of pints at lunchtime on a Friday (yes, we've all been there!) will drown out your productivity quicker than you can say "weekend binge". Of course it doesn't have to be this obvious, eating crisps, sweets, chocolates etc. at your desk can cause your blood sugar levels rise and then to crash making you feel tired lethargic and...uninspired!

This is a really simple part of motivation to keep up so follow these tips and you can then work on the more complex issues. Please bear in mind that I am not a nutritionist. These are techniques that I use myself everyday and they really work

Eat a healthy breakfast, if you can't stomach anything first thing in the morning; take something into work with you. All of your meals should consist of a portion of Carbohydrate (Brown bread, pasta, potatoes etc) Protein (Chicken, ham, egg whites etc)

Eat five portions of fruit and vegetables a day (one way to this is to have a glass of fresh orange juice with your breakfast, have a banana mid morning, an apple mid afternoon, some salad with your lunch and some vegetables with your evening meal)

Drink 2 litres of pure water a day (Keep a 2 litre bottle on your desk and fill it up every morning first thing, sip it through the day.

A majority of white collar jobs are very sedentary, millions are trapped behind their desks day in day out. It may not come as a surprise that just sitting there hour after hour will cause your body to seize up, particularly your trunk muscles (your abdomen and lower back) This won't do you any favours in the motivation stakes so its really good if you can get up as often as you can to have a good stretch out, go for a walk, get outside and breathe some air....and....sorry for bringing this up, but get to the gym! Every other day if you can, go first thing in the morning and do a little cardiovascular training and strength training, 45 minutes is all you need. With size of the part that your body plays in your motivation, you have to go! You really need to take care of it.

We have spoken about how your physiological state can affect you motivation bearing in mind the principle "you get out what you put in" Now, we can look at the psychological aspects of motivation and more importantly, how you can feed your mind for motivation

Let's look at what we listen to begin with, most of us listen to our car radio/iPod on the way to work in the morning, we need to pay attention to what we listen to if we want to be sure our motivation will arrive to work intact. Think of the music you listen too, is it catchy, upbeat; positive tunes that make you want to take on the world? Or is it dreary, melancholy music that makes you ask "Why does it always rain on me?" You may enjoy this music, and that's great, I certainly do, but I put it to you. Have you ever seen a highly motivated Goth?! My guess is no, having said that, we all have our own specific taste that motivate and inspire us, just be aware of yours and use it to the full.

Also consider that you could use the time you spend commuting to learn. Get yourself some courses or books on tape on subjects that really inspire you but wouldn't get a second look at home because of lack of time/resources. Listen to them as you commute and change dead time into learning time.

Next, think about what you watch. If spend the evening before watching mindless television and spent most of it channel hopping, you have neither unwound nor stimulated yourself. You can be stimulated the wrong way by watch explicit or violent programs. These can stir up the wrong kind of hormones and can leave you drained and aggressive, likewise exposing yourself to too much news can be soul destroying, particularly when it is portrayed as nothing positive is happening in the world. Watch things that make you happy. Positive programs that lift your spirits and inspire you. Once again, be aware of what works for you and do it. If there is nothing on the television. Have a read.

Reading can be one of the most motivating things you can do providing you read the right material. Celebrity magazines and tabloids are the junk food for the brain, fine in moderation but don't try and live off it. Motivation can come by reading self help material, biographies and other positive, inspiring material.

The upshot is that if you surround yourself with positive people, good food and drink, Inspiring images and words, you'll find it more and more difficult to be de-motivated.

Time management

We've brushed on this earlier in this book when we decided our "from here on in...". Time management will play a huge part in whether or not you fulfill your intention. Why? What do you think the biggest excuse when people don't achieve what they set out to? That's right! "I didn't have time" or "things got in the way". It's the easiest way out because its non specific, non-committal and it's basically an excuse. But that's OK. If we are aware of it, we can arm ourselves against it.

To start with, we need a good time management strategy that gives a hell of a lot more structure than a to-do list (Which rarely work with anything than day-today tasks anyway)

Time management in its purest forms has its basis in "to do lists". This involves taking everything you need to do in a specified timescale and writing them down in a descending list. Some make some attempts at prioritising their workload into some order of importance, some list randomly. While I respect that we all have things to do and get on with, what I do object to is that it seems to be fashionable to always be "busy". Ask anyone you know and in all probability, they will have "so much to do". Is this a social factor? Or is it that we really have too much on our plates? If we are really honest with ourselves, can we justify every waking minute and quantify it as "busy"?

Beyond "To-do" lists, where do we go from to get more out of our time? Why do we feel the need to be busy all the time? Are we giving ourselves a get out of jail free card? By saying that we are busy, eventually we will believe it ourselves, even if we are not.

As mentioned earlier, telling yourself that you were too busy to fulfil your intention will help in the short term but you'll still be left in the long term with a sense that maybe you could have achieved more. So, let's look at time management for fulfilling intentions.

Time Managers

I developed the Time Managers concept about three years ago, it's nothing new really, just an amalgamation of information that I picked up and some other ideas on how I applied it. Using this approach, I have simultaneously qualified in two part time college courses, one home study and one tutorial based, worked a full time job, taught 4 martial arts classes a week and 2 personal training sessions, plus training 4 to 5 times a week myself, spent quality time at home and with friends. Written all of the 16 supremacy training solutions ready to deliver training materials and now I'm writing this book. I'm not bragging, I'm saying that I'm no one special, and if I can do it, anyone can.

Firstly, we'll look at the attitude characteristics, then the prioritising system, plus a few other tips to keep you moving towards the intention you are trying to fulfil.

The first thing a time manager knows that when they say "I don't have time", they are really saying "I don't want to do that". When they say "I'm too busy" they are really saying "I'm not going to even consider anything you say" A Time Manager is brutally honest about themselves and the use of their time. As we previously alluded to earlier on, from here on in you have time! Rather than come back with "I don't have time..." come back with "I am doing..., it will take me...amount of time". By doing this, you are forcing yourself to be specific and to give some sort of commitment, even if it's next year.

A Time manager knows planning is important, but even more important is performing the plan well. Categorising correctly is important and what's crucial is sticking to the principles and not deviating. The time manager's method will allow you to sort out what is important and what is not.

A time manager enjoys "Me time". If you want to work all hours and not have your own life, then Time managers is not for you. A Time Manager knows how essential "me – time" is and takes it when it's due

Knowing what's important. A Time Manager doesn't fuss about what's not important. They take on board what is needed to be done, bend their energies towards it and complete it. More than this, they also take the key elements of the key tasks and separate further.

Surrounding these principles, a time managers approaches there activities with these two things in mind

A straight line approach.

Remember what we said at the start of the book about the difference between goal setting and just getting out there and doing it? A time manager takes this approach, they plan a little, but the overriding feeling is "What do I have to do to get this done?" A time manager identifies the quickest, simplest route to the place they want to go and they take it. Remember, no time for irrelevancies!

They focus on the intention.

A time manager knows their intention. So, what they do is keep performing actions that bring them closer to fulfilling their intentions until lo and behold, they have! Remember, there are only two things you can do, you can either perform actions that take you closer to fulfilling your intentions or you can perform actions that take you further away from fulfilling your intentions. There is no middle ground. They keep going towards their intention until they have got there.

Targeted, maintenance and rest

The Time manager's prioritisation method involves putting first things first. Let's think of an analogy of a football player

A football player's role is to score goals. There are a lot of things he has to do to enable him to score goals, but scoring goals is his main aim. If he doesn't score goals, he gets fired (or sold!)

Let's look at a list of some of the things he needs to do to enable him to score goals.

- ❑ Physical Training
- ❑ Eating and hydration
- ❑ Sleep
- ❑ Attend strategy meetings with the team
- ❑ Technical training

The football player can only do these tasks; no one else can do them for him. If he wants to score goals, it is of up most importance that all of these things get done.

This is known as TARGET activity. You may have noticed that these five tasks all take the footballer closer to his goals. If he does not perform these tasks, he will be taken further away from his goals

In order for these focus time activities to take place, other things must be happening, but they can be performed by anyone.

- ❑ Write up training schedule
- ❑ Shopping and cooking food
- ❑ Work out sleep patterns
- ❑ Write the agenda for strategy meeting
- ❑ Plan technical training sessions

These are known as MAINTENANCE activities. How many professional sports people do any of the above? They need to be focussed on their discipline, not worrying about admin or cooking. However, buffer activities still need to be done.

Finally apart from sleep, a football player needs time to unwind and relax. This is known as REST activities. One that many of us forget to do, therefore, we are going to build it in to our time management plan.

Divide your time into three parts,

TARGET (DOING)	MAINTAIN (PLANNING,)	REST
<p>This column will have all the tasks you have to do, whether you like them or not listed. These will all be tasks that take you closer to your goals. For a footballer, they would be:</p> <p>Physical Training Eating and hydration Sleep Attend strategy meetings with the team Technical training</p> <p>Do your target time 4 days a week</p>	<p>This is where you can be your own personal assistant. All workload planning and administration should be done in this time. Footballers time would be:</p> <p>Write up training schedule Shopping and cooking food Work out sleep patterns Write the agenda for strategy meeting Plan technical training sessions</p> <p>Do your buffer time 1 day a week (quietest day is best)</p>	<p>Relax, recuperate and unwind doing whatever rests you up.</p> <p>Evenings Weekends Lunchtimes</p> <p>Making the most of your rest time allows you to be so much more effective in your most important focus time.</p>

By targeting and thereby focusing your time so intently. You can get more done than the average two or three people around you. Reason being is that you are simply concentrating on tasks that are important.

If I give you an example of how this works. A friend of mine follows the target principle to the letter in his role as a training manager. Now his company works on an individual target basis (As most companies do) and he is given these targets at the beginning of the year with periodic reviews every three months. While others around him rush about like headless chickens, claiming to be too busy for this and to not have time for that, all my friend does is work towards those targets that his manager has set him. And guess what, he always gets his targets that his manager sets him while others around him complain about how unfair "the system" is because they didn't do too well in the appraisal when really, they should have just identified what was really important (in this case, the targets set for them) targeted on them and keep gong at it until they hit it. It's really simple, your target time is where you will spend the majority of your time,

you focus ONLY on things that will take you closer to fulfilling your intention.

Procrastination

One of the worst things that can happen to a time manager is procrastination.

It affects different people in different ways. Some of the reasons may be

Time of day (Monday Morning, Friday afternoon)

Workload (Too much, too little)

Amount of time (Too much, too little)

Lack of energy

No passion for the work

No passion for their own time

To combat this, we need to develop our own **Anti-procrastination technique**. Different things work for different people so let's consider a few

Plan your work and work your plan

Use the Target, maintenance and rest planner on Monday morning first thing. Plan your week and stick to it. Check it for a maximum of five minutes each weekday morning to see that you are still on schedule. Although this is essentially a planner, the real fun starts when the definitions of what your target, maintenance and rest periods actually are get ingrained into your personality. Then, you don't need to look at a planner, you know exactly what you need to and you just do it!

Know the value of five minutes

So many of us think about starting a new task at 17:15, 15 minutes before we start our rest time, and then dismiss it thinking "It's too late to start anything now". Next time this happens, start it and maximise your target time, its surprising how much you can turn out with just 10 – 15 minutes of focused working time. A lot of time is lost by people telling themselves that "it's too late to start anything now" Some of the greatest songs ever written were written in a few minutes. Know the value, but don't let it cut into your rest time. Working longer and longer hours continuously will, longer term, drain you of any energy you have. In order to survive in the longer term, you must maintain the balance between the three categories

Ask yourself the question

“What is the best use of my time right now?” And answer yourself honestly. To go towards fulfilling your intentions, is the best use of your time, sat in the break area gossiping, or commenting to your colleagues about how busy you are? Or blankly staring at your computer screen? Probably not, so identify the ways that you can come closer to your goals and perform it when you feel you are procrastinating

Think of the results

What does fulfilling your intentions with good time management mean to you? Getting promoted? Getting home to see the family? Feeling less stressed? Keep the results in the forefront of your mind. If you procrastinate, you will rob yourself of these results

Dealing with E-mails

As soon as you receive an e-mail, open it, scan read it and minimise it. You've got the gist of it and you won't be starting it yet until you've finished what you're working on. Remember, your current task was important to you at one stage

If an E-mail can be dealt with by a short answer, do it straight away. Even though you're interrupting your flow, it only takes a few seconds and it's out of the way

Ask people not to send you E-mails that you don't want to receive because they have no have relevance to you. If you have not done this, you have no right to complain when you do receive them

Long E-mails (over three lines), unless they are an integral part of your Targeting or maintenance time, avoid!!! If you can deal with something via a phone call, it's a lot more direct and takes a lot less time

If you are seriously inundated with E-mails with constant requests for your time try this:

Send an electronic version of your diary showing your Target time and maintenance time. Invite people to find a slot. Remember that this is your time that you are renting out to other people and not the other way around. If you find that people are taking time away from you, your duties and your resting time. Stop renting it out. Start looking at it this way and that's half the battle won

Classic scenario, you are getting into your target time and things are going well, you may even manage to get home early at this rate. Then...Someone arrives at you're side or at your door, "Can I have a quick 5 minutes...." 30 minutes later your still going strong. Sound familiar? Try these strategies

First things first, learn to say no! If you are in the midst of something you have planned to be very important, really you don't have 5 minutes to give, so tell them that. If someone came over and said "Can I have £5 of your money," you'd probably react differently! A much used expression is that "time is money" So treat it like money! The conversation may go a little like this

"Hi...Can I have 5 min's of your time"

"Terribly sorry, I'm in the middle of (tell them what your doing) Can we do this at (time)?"

Notice you're not just saying "I'm snowed under" or "I'm so busy" as these are dismissive statements. You are telling them what you are doing and giving them an alternative time.

If you have an office, have an open door policy. When you are doing your maintenance work, have your door open. When you are doing your Target work, keep your door closed. People will learn eventually that you shouldn't be disturbed when your door is closed.

Make yourself available at certain time in the day. If you have a role where interruptions are the norm and you pretty much know who the main offenders are. Let them know the times you will be available in the day. Then, if they come to you outside these times, you can apologise, and say that due to (task your doing) can they come and see you later.

Most people in today's working environment are invited to meetings they either don't want to be at or don't need to be at. There is not much can be done about the first type. For the second type, try these

Firstly, if you are running a meeting, bear this in mind

"No one ever complained about a meeting that was too short"

Be as simple, direct and to the point as you can and facilitate your meeting accordingly.

Find out your role in the meeting, are you key? Do you need to add to the meeting? If you can find out your purpose, you can find out if you need to attend.

Don't be afraid to move things along. If you are in the middle of a meeting that seems to have lost its way, don't wait! This is your time that's being eating into. Draw the meeting back with a simple

"I believe we are deviating here, lets get back to (the point of this meeting)"

If a meeting overruns, and you can't afford the time, leave. You only committed that amount of time when you accepted the meeting. Of course there will be times that this is not possible, but take each situation as it comes.

Delegation

People who delegate can either come across as brilliant people who have a real interest in other people's development

Or

Lazy, good for nothing people who hide away from any work they have by offloading it!

Obviously, you want to be the former so let's look at firstly how you can delegate to others effectively.

Think about it

Think carefully about what you delegate to who. The task that you delegate has to be challenging, but not impossible while at the same time, not too easy. Be sure the person you are delegating to has a good grasp of what's expected

Take into account the individuals short and long term goals

This is where delegation falls down a lot of the time because managers just give away tasks they find uninteresting or ones they dislike and hold on to tasks they like to do. Think about where the areas that the person you will be delegating to wants to develop in. This way they will buy into the task then can get on with as there is something in it for them

Sell, don't tell

Never ever tell someone what to do. Sit down and have a chat with them, explain the background information, talk about the task you would like them to do and why you think they would be good at the task. Show the benefit of doing the task and ask them if they would like to do it.

Set up a support

Check in with people you have delegated to on a regular basis and make it clear that you are there for them should they need you.

Self Delegation

This is separating your Target and maintenance time. It should give you a slightly different way of looking at it.

How these people like Richard Branson, Martha Stuart and David Beckham have defined their own success is by "Sticking to what they know" Do you Think Richard Branson answers his own phone calls? Do you think Alan Sugar does his own filing? Probably not. They concentrate on going out and creating revenue for their companies at the highest level.

But they do have something that many of us don't. A personal assistant!

Ok. So let's come back to reality. We don't want to compare our time with these entrepreneurs yet. But we do want to adopt their attitude

***STICK TO WHAT YOU KNOW, PLAY YOUR STRENGTHS AND
DELEGATE EVERYTHING ELSE***

But what if you don't have anyone to delegate to? Here's a way you can be your own personal assistant

P.A Day

One day a week, you will be your own personal assistant. Anything you would have delegated if you had someone you would delegate through, you will complete on this day. This is part of your maintenance time.

This can be things like non-urgent e-mails, routine reports and administration outside your target time. Plan this in on your planner

TIME MANAGERS PLANNER

Day	Target	Maintenance	Resting

Plan your tasks in the appropriate categories

How will you ensure Straight line Approach and Focused Energy?

Anti Procrastination Technique?

Dead Time

Dead time applies to chunks of time that are not being used for target, maintenance or rest. It's time where something hasn't gone right and you find yourself sitting there not knowing what to do.

A good example of this is when you are in the car driving places (you are driving) Travelling around, waiting for something or someone, get the idea? We lose masses of time every day through dead time which happens through no fault of our own. It's different for all of us but as I have alluded to, many of us find ourselves on a 30 minute to an hour commute twice a day or sat in the staff room at lunchtime reading a paper for something to do. The first thing we need to do is map out a typical day (if there is such a thing!) and identify where there are opportunities when dead time could occur. If you are at work all day then this could be when you are waiting for someone to turn up to a meeting, when you finish a piece of work, or when you are on your commute. If you are at home all day, dead time could be when you are watching television or waiting for food to cook. Dead time is usually centred around waiting for something or someone else while "idling" yourself.

Delays and dead time, how they can work for you

All the planning strategies so far are great enough in theory you may think. But, rightly so, we need to consider if things don't go our way. We have already discussed things that you, yourself can control. For example, interruptions like E-mails, meetings and people, we now have ways that we can deal with this.

If delays happen, it's not always something that we can control. But we can arrange to have "emergency cover"

Emergency cover are tasks you can do anywhere at anytime. Let's look at some potential scenarios

Driving and Traffic Jams

Driving is pretty much a waste of time, you are travelling to get somewhere but that's it, you are not doing anything else in this time

Turn driving time into learning time

Purchase or go to the library and get Course CDs and books on Tape. Learn about new ways of working, industry seminars even a course that you've wanted to do, but kept putting off because you "didn't have time." Now you do. For Example, if your journey to work takes half an hour each way, you could listen to one hour a day. I recently used this technique to great effect. I needed to be able to recite 15 short paragraphs, and, like many, the last thing I wanted to do would be to add to my reading pile. So, I tape recorded myself reading the paragraphs and played them whenever I went out in the car. When it came to my recitation, I was word perfect but the real satisfaction came from the fact that I had done without expending any more time than I already was!

On a five day working week that equates to 20 hours a month, 240 hours a year. That's some university courses recommended study, and you aren't expending anymore time than what you are at the moment! So if your intention involves learning a new language or some form of study, don't forget about learning in your car. Audio cassettes and CD's can be purchased on a wide variety of subjects and pod casts and the ilk can be downloaded for almost anything over the internet.

General travelling is Another example of dead time, here are a few things you could do.

Learn or catch up by I-pod or reading

Just like the above but this time you can focus a lot more and interact with your materials (do exercises, write summaries/reports etc.) because you are not driving. Again, if your intention is to learn something and you spend a lot of time on public transport, this can be an opportune time to complete coursework, plan for the future etc. Especially on trains and planes due to the table space and quieter nature and opposed to tubes and buses

Portable office

If you are on a train and you have access to one, take a laptop and mobile phone with you and continue your day on the train. Just ensure that for these “working journeys” you haven’t planned any work where you need much interaction with anyone else.

The dead time list

“Finding the time” to spend with mundane task is all the more harder to find because, you don’t really want to do it in the first place. For example, making phone calls, for some people, is particularly challenging. But also essential if you are to move towards fulfilling your intentions. Therefore, we need to construct a picture of these non-urgent tasks that need to be done and create a list. This list should be kept close to hand, in the car, in your brief case, on the fridge etc. Then the next time you find yourself in a dead time zone, take out this list, make your phone calls, do the tasks etc. By mentally conditioning yourself that you will do these tasks next time you are in dead time. You won’t find yourself thinking whether or not you can be bothered to do it.

An excellent example of how this can work in practice is to look at a friend of mine, Andy. Andy runs his own dry cleaning business, and, as with any business, he need to make sales/marketing calls as par for the course, mainly to corporate firms in order to obtain contracts for their dry cleaning.

Even know he knows it’s a necessary “evil”, Andy hates to do it, so, what he does is keeps his prospect telephone list in his car. Then when he is stuck in traffic, he gets on the hands free and makes some calls. He says this has made it easier for him mentally as he is in the car anyway and not doing, or able to do much else. To him, it’s the perfect opportunity to make these calls that he has been putting off

Folder

In a similar vein, keep a folder with intention based tasks in and contact numbers. You can do this at home or from work. This is for when things don't go the way that you planned and you suddenly find yourself with a bit of time on your hands. Having this folder close to hand and in the back of your mind, that if things don't go as planned, or you finish something a little early. You can revert to this folder and continue working on fulfilling your intention. This technique is quite common when individuals are working their way through a home study course, I certainly used it. Taking a file with me to work and getting bits done at a time, remember that the best way to eat an elephant is one piece at a time so do not underestimate the power and the accumulative effect of getting things done a little bit at a time.

Task combination

Now this is something that I don't think anyone uses to their full potential. This involves taking two tasks that you can do at the same time and...doing them at the same time! When I used to do personal fitness training, I worked with a lovely lady who was absolutely insistent that she had no time to work out and fulfil her intention of losing two stone. This was because she had two young children and a baby at home, and she HAD to watch her soaps in the evening when they were in bed. So, we performed the task combination of riding a stationary bike while watching soaps. It worked really well because Linda began to associate watching her soaps and riding her bike as one activity. Therefore she was doing at least an hour of exercise every night without really thinking about it. Another example of task combination could be the factors that we have already talked about such as listening to course and books on tape while driving.

Technical breakdown

It's a 21st century world now. What this means is that a lot of us are heavily reliant on technology to do the simplest of tasks. Everyone these days has a mobile phone, most have laptops, blackberries, organisers, MP3 players. There's nothing wrong with all this, but how do we cope when these technical comforts are taken out of the equation? To explore this further...think about spending a day without your phone. These days, this makes a lot of people break out in a sweat (it certainly makes me!) If you are among the braver souls, try...wait for it...leaving the house without your phone!!! Shock! I bring this up to illustrate how essential technical items have become to us and how over reliance can impact on our progress towards fulfilling our intentions.

My intention at the moment is completing this book. The way I work is that I think and type at the same time, so imagine my horror when I came to my computer the other day and found that it wouldn't boot up (wife turned off without shutting down, but I digress...!). I was determined to get some writing down, so I done it the old fashioned way...Pen and paper! I wrote half a chapter this way and therefore done the thinking, the next day when the computer was working again, I simply typed it up. Yes it took me a little longer than if I just typed it up but not as long as if I didn't get any writing done on that day plus, psychologically, I would have lost my motivation trail and I would have felt bad because I didn't get anything done.

If you need technology to fulfil your intention, this is fine, but make sure that you have a plan B, just in case the technology isn't there one day. Remember, we need to remove every possible excuse that you could give for not fulfilling your intention.

In conclusion

So many of us are experts at looking busy! We rush around all day picking up tasks, telling everyone how busy we are. But how much do we actually do? Firstly:

"Never confuse activity with effectiveness"

Rushing around proves nothing, delivering results, straight line style does. From now on in, relate your time directly to your job objectives and you cannot go wrong. Of course other things will come up, but your job is the most important thing to get right.

Always refer to your targets on a daily basis to keep your focus tight

Time management isn't difficult if you don't want it to be. By following your targeting, maintaining and resting principles, you will get more done than two or even three of you at the present time

This means getting home on time, little to no stress at work, a fulfilling personal working life, lots more family and social time, maybe promotions and pay increases, who knows? It's completely up to you.

Use your takeaway materials (planners) to plan your next week at work. Then apply the principles learnt today and see the difference for yourself.

When you see how great it is to be liberated from the "who can be the busiest" race, apply it to your personal life and see the even more rewarding results.

Final note on time management

We all want to get as much done as possible. One thing I would urge you to bear in mind when you are setting goals for yourself is that to remember that you are human. It's an all too often sight mid – late January every year, the gyms are empty again, cigarettes are sold out. People really think that the passing of New Years Eve will change them into this unstoppable goal-achieving machine. Quite simply, it won't! Keep in mind that you have certain patterns of behaviour that will need to be changed and be realistic with yourself when setting the boundaries.